

Ferguson's Mascot.

By HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH.

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From the first Ferguson had disliked the pug. The sight of the fat, wheezy little animal following at the heels of his pretty next door neighbor awoke in him an unreasonable desire to prod that pampered pet with his walking stick.

Ferguson's interest in the girl next door was fast approaching the critical stage. Perhaps the natural attraction which beauty holds for youth was heightened by the fact that the girl seemed unaware of his existence.

The pug took a hand in the game one delicious spring day when Ferguson, who was supposed to be studying law in his room, was in reality watching the pink of the peach blossoms against the blue of the sky and feeling in his heart a vague, exquisite response to the charm of the season.

All at once the current of his thoughts was changed by an asthmatic barking in his neighbor's back yard. A black kitten shot across the grass to the shelter of the peach tree. The pug waddled after and stood guard below, coughing violently as a result of his unusual exertions.

The law books had no chance after that. Even the peach blossoms became only the setting of the picture. The black kitten in the branches bowed agonizingly. The pretty girl below called her in dulcet tones which would

sary for the pug to interfere again. Without his good offices the acquaintance progressed rapidly. Miss Morrell's callers were very likely to find a dark, well dressed man sitting on the hammock beside her or occupying one of the rustic chairs on the porch or smoking in the library with the air of one who feels at home.

Unfortunately Miss Morrell did not second these efforts as she might have done. She continued to treat her persistent caller with a consideration which Ferguson thought distinctly unnecessary. When he came one night prepared to take her driving and found she had gone boating with Randall he gave a harsher name to the act.

Had Miss Morrell been conciliatory all might have been well, but instead she wore an air of studied indifference, and when she did not resent his approaches she laughed at him. Accordingly in fifteen minutes the interview terminated abruptly.

"In that case," said Ferguson, rising to his feet, "the best thing for me to do is to take my hat and go home."

And Miss Morrell replied, "I quite agree with you."

Only one thing interfered with carrying out this programme immediately—Ferguson could not find his hat. "Good evening," said Miss Morrell in the background as if weary of waiting for him to take the initiative.

"I beg you not to imagine that I am delaying intentionally!" exclaimed Ferguson, with indignation. "But even you can see that it is impossible for me to leave the house bareheaded."

"You put your hat on the chair. I saw you," said Miss Morrell.

"I am quite aware that I put it there," returned Ferguson stiffly, "but it is easy to see that it is not there now."

For some minutes he hunted. Miss Morrell laid aside her offended dignity sufficiently to assist in the search. All at once she started nervously.

"I do hope Punch didn't find it!" she exclaimed. "He's so mischievous sometimes."

But when the hat was discovered it was in Punch's society. Moreover, it had lost its resemblance to a hat. The brim was missing, and the crown was fast disappearing. Punch surveyed them over the wreck and grinned complacently.

The two young people looked at each other, and Miss Morrell's lips twitched. Ferguson thought she was on the point of laughter, and he smiled encouragingly. Then she surprised him by turning her face to the wall and bursting into tears.

"My darling girl," exclaimed Ferguson, almost beside himself. "My dearest Ina, I beg you won't give a thought to the worthless thing."

"But you were going away angry," said a stifled voice.

"Angry with you?" cried Ferguson. "Never!" He took her in his arms again as he had done under the peach tree, but he did not let her go as quickly.

And that wise old pug left the ruined hat on the rug and waddled away to the window seat, as if satisfied that they were once more capable of managing their own affairs.

Punch is older now and divides his mistress' devotion with a small pink and white rival said to resemble Ferguson, but he wears a silver collar, and no one grudges him his place as an honored member of the household.

Whatever Ferguson's faults, he is not ungrateful.

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"For several winters past my wife has been troubled with a most persistent and disagreeable cough, which invariably extended over a period of several weeks and caused her many sleepless nights," writes Will J. Hayner, editor of the Burley, Colo., Bulletin.

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This remedy is for sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

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